

March 17, 2016

Dear City Council Members,

First, I would like to express my support for the decision reached by my fellow Planning Commissioners regarding Amendments to Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code for Retail Marijuana. I applaud their thoughtful deliberation, and regret that I was absent, due to illness, during the final vote. I also appreciate the passionate input from our community.

Even though I support the decision reached, I do have two concerns that I would like to share regarding accessibility, especially for those to have a medical need. I voted against I-502, in part due to a concern that medical marijuana and retail marijuana would be merged, as it has. As a cancer survivor, I know first-hand how those activities we do daily can take a toll on mind and body. It is easy to say to healthy people that they can drive to Kirkland, Bellevue or Issaquah, but that could be such a chore for someone who is ill that it would deter them from accessing a substance that could help them improve their current state and outcomes.

My concerns include the following:

- I feel we did not flush out a good reason for excluding a legal retail business from the retail zones. During initial deliberations, we thoroughly discussed carve-outs for the Downtown and Overlake areas, which I fully support. Yet retail zones were not considered during final deliberations.
- The five year waiting period before additional review could be too long, thus unnecessarily restricting a legal retail business from opening in Redmond. I recommend an interim review in 6-12 months to determine if the licensees are able to find a location in which to operate. If they cannot, I believe the City should re-examine the zoning and buffer requirements.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Meishelle Haverkamp  
Planning Commissioner